



A Quarterly Newsletter by the City of Fort Smith

April, 2009

City Leaders Bank On Riverfront Development

....market study underway

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Fort Smith's riverfront has long been recognized as a community strength. The City of Fort Smith and the National Park Service have parks along the riverfront, and the U.S. Marshals Museum will be constructed overlooking the waterway. However, there remains significant potential for waterfront development to improve Fort Smith's quality of place.

A riverfront plan was prepared in 1997 following the 1996 tornado. That plan focused on areas near the downtown and principally addressed public uses such as parks. As a result of

that plan, the River Park amphitheater, events building and pavilion and a public parking lot were constructed. That investment spurred nearby private investment in residential and commercial projects.



The City of Fort Smith is partnering with the Fort Smith Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Westphal Group to prepare an opportunity analysis for

approximately 80 acres of Arkansas River frontage north of the downtown River Park. The analysis is being prepared by Cushman & Wakefield, an internationally-recognized real estate advisory firm.

The analysis will consider a variety of potential developments including:

- * a multi-use indoor events center
- * an outdoor minor league baseball stadium
- * hotels
- * museums
- * pedestrian paths
- * retail, office and other commercial uses

See **Riverfront Planning**, page 2

Fort Smith Benefits From Federal Appropriations

Last month, the City of Fort Smith received \$1.3 million in appropriations from the federal government for 3 projects. The appropriations were obtained by U.S. Senators **Blanche Lincoln** and **Mark Pryor** and by U.S. Congressman **John Boozman**.

The May Branch flood control project through northern areas of Fort Smith will receive \$109,000 of the funding. This will allow the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to continue with engineering work.

Another \$950,000 was earmarked
See **Federal Appropriations**, page 3

Tornado Preparation Saves Lives

Riverfront Planning, from page 1

- * residential development
- * a marina

Cushman & Wakefield will undertake market studies to determine which uses are most likely to succeed. They'll also estimate development costs and identify potential investors and tenants who may be interested in Fort Smith's riverfront development.

Public input will be an important part of the opportunity analysis. As ideas and plans are prepared, they'll be posted on the Internet at www.fortsmithar.gov/riverfrontideas. If you have any suggestions or comments, please e-mail them to riverfrontideas@fortsmithar.gov.

Preparation of the opportunity analysis and possible development plans should be completed by spring 2010.



Mayor's Prayer Breakfast

The 38th annual mayor's prayer breakfast will be held on Friday, July 17th at 6:15 a.m. at the Holiday Inn City Center Hotel. Tickets for the breakfast will be available at the Fort Smith Regional Chamber of Commerce, 612 Garrison Ave. beginning in late June. The breakfast is organized by the Christian Businessmen's Committees.

Springtime brings potential for severe and dangerous weather for western Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma. The Fort Smith police and fire departments want you to be ready in the event tornadoes, high winds, or other severe weather hits our area.

Being alert to the onset of bad weather can help you avoid injury. During severe weather, the Fort Smith police department's communications center uses many means to learn of approaching dangerous weather conditions. Many officers on patrol are trained storm spotters. Several citizens are also trained weather spotters and provide valuable reports.

If the National Weather Service issues a tornado warning for Fort Smith or if a police officer or other trained weather spotter reports a tornado, the police dept. will activate the city's storm warning siren system. Located strategically throughout the city, the sirens alert citizens that the threat of a tornado is imminent. The siren is sounded continuously during the immediate threat. There is no "all clear" signal given.

When the sirens are sounded or a warning is broadcast, you should immediately seek safe shelter. Don't call 9-1-1 unless you have an emergency. The public safety dispatchers can't provide you with additional weather information. Consider using a battery operated radio or TV to monitor the storm's activity.

You should plan your safety actions now before a storm arrives. The following tips are provided for your safety during turbulent weather.

- Go to a storm shelter or basement if you have one. If you don't, go to the smallest interior room in your house. A bathtub in an interior bathroom is sometimes the only thing left after a tornado.
- Stay away from windows, doors, and heavy objects. If you're in a room with heavy objects, get

underneath a table and stay close to the floor. Cover yourself with a blanket, quilt or mattress for protection from flying debris.

- If outdoors, lay face down in a ditch or other low area. Curl up as small as possible and protect your head and neck.
- Don't try to outrun a tornado if you're in a car. Exit the car and seek a safer place such as a building or a ditch if there's no building nearby.
- If at school, leave gyms, auditoriums and other free-span rooms. Go to your school's tornado shelter if it has one. If not, go to interior rooms and hallways on the lowest floor, avoiding any areas that open to the outside.
- If at work, shopping or other public place, seek a small interior room on the lowest floor such as a restroom, closet, office or maintenance room with short walls. Avoid outside walls, glass areas, areas with heavy objects, and large open areas. If you're unfamiliar with the public place and inclement weather is forecasted, you'll want to locate a safe place upon your arrival.

Preparation is one of the keys to surviving turbulent weather. More safety tips and information on severe weather are available on the Internet at www.tornadopproject.com.



Don't forget to plan for your pets' needs.
See related article on page 3.



Plan for Your Pets, Too



When preparing your severe weather action plan, you need to plan for the needs of your pets before, during and after a weather emergency. The following tips from the Federal Emergency Management Agency will help your pet survive a disaster.

- First, plan ahead for your pet's disaster needs. If your family must evacuate your residence, know ahead of time which hotels will accept pets. For public health reasons, many emergency shelters can't accept pets.
- While the sun is still shining, consider packing a pet survival kit. The kit should include pet food, bottled water, medications, veterinary records, cat litter and pan, can opener, food dishes, first aid kit and other special supplies your pet may need.
- Make sure your pet's identification tags are up-to-date and securely fastened to your pet's collar. If your pet gets lost, his tag is his ticket home. Make sure you have a current photo of your pet for identification purposes.
- During a weather emergency, bring your pets inside immediately.

Never leave a pet outside or tied up during a storm.

- Have newspapers on hand for sanitary purposes. Feed the animals moist or canned food so they will need less water to drink.
- Separate dogs and cats, even if they normally get along. The anxiety caused by severe weather can cause pets to act irrationally.
- If you must evacuate your home, take your pets with you. Pets are unlikely to survive on their own.
- In the first few days after a disaster, leash your pets when they go outside. Familiar scents and landmarks may be altered, and your pet may become confused and lost.

For many residents, pets are just like family members. Your pets deserve your consideration when planning for weather emergencies. Residents needing more information about pet care during and after a storm may contact the Sebastian County Humane Society at 783-4395.



Federal Appropriations, from page 1

for streetscape improvements along Garrison Ave. The funding will be used to continue the urban aesthetic improvements on the east end of the downtown thoroughfare.

The downtown electric trolley system will be expanded with \$237,000 in federal funds. The city had previously earmarked \$214,000 for this work, making a total of \$451,000 to extend the historic trackage.

The partnership between the non-profit Fort Smith Streetcar Assn. and the City of Fort Smith provides tourists and local residents with a unique experience. As preparation for construction of the U.S. Marshals Museum continues, this turn-of-the-century mode of transportation will fill an essential function of moving visitors in the downtown area.

THE FOCUS thanks Fort Smith's congressional delegation for obtaining federal funding for these projects.



Community Notification System Gets the Word Out.....registering additional phone numbers keeps you informed

Earlier this year, the City of Fort Smith launched a new service which rapidly alerts citizens about emergency conditions and other important information. A recorded message can be sent to thousands of telephone numbers and e-mail addresses in a few minutes. The messages may be targeted to specific neighborhoods or to the entire city.

All published telephone numbers are automatically included in the system. Residents with unlisted telephone numbers may subscribe to the service by registering at the city's web site. Go to www.fortsmithar.gov and link to the Connect CTY portal.

Citizens may also find it useful to register cell phone numbers, work phone numbers and e-mail addresses at this

same web site. With these additional registrations, an alert message sent to your home telephone number will also reach you if you're away from home. This can be especially helpful if there's unattended children or an elderly resident at home. There's no charge for these additional registrations.

All telephone numbers and e-mail addresses registered at the web site are handled with confidentiality. They're not shared with anyone else and will be used only to send you important notifications from the City of Fort Smith.

Citizens needing more information about the community notification system may visit the city's web site at www.fortsmithar.gov or call the Fort Smith fire dept. at 784-2370.

City Offices Launch Recycling Program

The City of Fort Smith has begun *Operation GO* (the GO stands for green office) as an Earth-friendly sustainability initiative. Efforts are underway to reduce energy consumption at city facilities by automating thermostats and simply turning off lights when not needed.



Resources for a Green Office

A cornerstone of *Operation GO* is reducing the amount of waste from city offices and other operations. It's estimated that as much as 77% of the solid waste generated in offices is recyclable. All 17 of the city's departments are eagerly participating in recycling efforts. The department of

sanitation has organized the waste-reduction strategy.

Each office has been provided a recycling receptacle. Custodial crews collect the recyclables separately from other waste, and place the items in recycling containers for collection by the department of sanitation. The program is being expanded to public venues such as parks and libraries.

Program manager **Joe Hopper** reports that the recycling is diverting an average of 1,080 pounds of material from the landfill each week. Each ton of recycled material saves 380 gallons of oil needed to make the items from virgin raw material. The program not only conserves landfill space but also saves energy and raw material sources such as forests.

Fort Smith businesses interested in starting an office recycling program should contact their sanitation service provider. Customers of the Fort Smith department of sanitation may call 784-2350 to discuss recycling opportunities for their business.

Trees Are More Than Shade

Trees measure a community's ecological health. They are good indicators of the health of an urban ecosystem because of the biological functions of the roots and leaves. When trees are large and healthy, the ecological systems that support them are also healthy.

Healthy trees provide valuable environmental benefits which can be measured in terms of ecosystem services. The greater the tree cover and permeable surface in a community, the more ecosystem services are

produced. These services are measured as stormwater runoff reduction, improved air and water quality, carbon storage and energy reduction.

The physical framework of a community is called its infrastructure. These utilitarian workhorses of a city can be divided into green and gray. Green infrastructure are areas covered with trees, shrubs, and grass; gray infrastructure are areas of buildings, roads, utilities, and parking lots.

Green infrastructure is



porous, allowing water to soak into soil which naturally filters pollutants before entering rivers. Gray infrastructure is impenetrable, forcing

YARD CARE - AVOIDING POLLUTION

Keeping your yard environment looking green can be accomplished without harming the environment beyond your yard. Too much of a good thing creates problems in your yard and downstream for aquatic habitat. Following these tips will minimize the impact of fertilizers and herbicides used in your yard.

- ❖ Read the label carefully and follow its directions for proper application. Too much fertilizer or herbicide will harm your lawn and plants, and run off into the stormwater drainage system.
- ❖ Test the soil first to be sure fertilizer is needed. The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service tests soil at no charge. One pint of soil is needed for proper testing. Call them at 484-7737 for more information.
- ❖ Don't fertilize before a rainstorm.
- ❖ Use organic fertilizer.
- ❖ Use compost to add nutrients to tired, worn out soil. Mixing compost with soil means your plants will need less chemical fertilizer and less water. The compost can also suppress plant diseases and parasites.
- ❖ Mulch leaves and grass clippings, or leave them on the ground.

Follow these steps to keep your yard and the environment green. Mother Nature will reward you in many ways.



Program Puts "The Bite" on Mosquitoes



The arrival of spring is Mother Nature's signal that our environment is renewing itself. Most of nature's spring-time renewals are pleasant and enjoyable. However, one renewal – the hatch of mosquitoes – is a nuisance.

The concern about mosquitoes has heightened in the last few years with the spread of the West Nile Virus to Arkansas. The virus is carried by mosquitoes, and can cause serious illness or death in people and animals.

The only way to prevent West Nile Virus is to eliminate mosquitoes. While total elimination is impossible, steps can be taken to reduce the mosquito population. The Fort Smith street and traffic control department sprays the city for mosquitoes every week during the mosquito season (typically April - October).

The spraying is accomplished by mixing an EPA-approved chemical with mineral oil and "fogging" the mixture into the air. The spraying is done during nighttime hours when there's the fewest people outdoors. However, the spraying controls only adult mosquitoes.

The best mosquito reduction effort is to prevent the hatch of new mosquitoes. Mosquito larvae need stagnant water for 5-7 days to hatch. Even small amounts of water such as a bird bath, a clogged gutter or a

bucket are sufficient. You should do everything possible to eliminate standing water. If the standing water can't be eliminated, stirring the standing water every 3-4 days is helpful.

Some areas of standing water such as ponds and drainage ways can't be eliminated. For these areas maintained by the city, pellets will be dispersed in the standing water. The pellets will prevent the mosquito larvae from hatching.

You can minimize your risk of mosquito bites by using insect repellants, particularly those with DEET or Picaridin. Taking sulfur tablets may also keep mosquitoes away from you. It's advisable to wear long sleeves and long pants when going into mosquito-infested areas. Limiting outdoor activities at dawn, dusk and other times when mosquitoes are most active will reduce your encounters with the pesky insects.

Citizens needing more information about the West Nile Virus may call the Sebastian County health department at 452-8600 or visit the Internet at www.healthyarkansas.com or www.westnilevirus.nbii.gov. If you have questions about mosquito control, call the Fort Smith street and traffic control department at 784-2360 or visit their web site at www.fortsmithar.gov.

Insect repellants can help keep mosquitoes and other bothersome insects away from you. When applying a repellant, follow these precautions.

- * First, read the label and follow the manufacturer's directions.
- * Apply the repellant only to exposed skin or clothing. Never apply a repellant underneath your clothing.
- * Never apply a repellant to a skin area with cuts, wounds or other irritation.
- * Don't apply the repellant around your eyes or mouth, and use it sparingly around your ears. When using sprays, don't apply the spray directly to your face. Instead, apply the spray to your hands and then gently rub it on your face.



Good Community Living Tip

Furniture designed for indoor use shouldn't be placed for outdoor use.

Upholstery and other similar materials aren't intended to weather the elements. Left on a porch or in view of others, indoor furniture can quickly deteriorate and give the neighborhood an unsightly appearance.

Good community living tips are offered to help improve everyone's quality of life in Fort Smith.

YOUR AD
COULD BE
HERE!

The Community Abounds

Relive the Lives of Notable Citizens at Tales of the Crypt

The Oak Cemetery Commission will present its 12th annual *Tales of the Crypt* on Sunday, April 26th. The history and lives of 10 citizens buried at Oak Cemetery will be portrayed by actors in period clothing.

Citizens from the past expected to be portrayed this year include jazz musician and band leader Alphonso Trent; Captain Billy Horne, a Confederate soldier; James Smith, Jr., a victim of the 1898 cyclone; outlaw John Childers, who was executed in 1873; Deputy Marshals Wiley Early and Ed Armorer; local television personality and community leader Polly Crews; Dr. Lee Ingraham, a physician from the turn of the century; builder and painter Fritz Andres; and businessman Casper Reutzel.

Admission to *Tales of the Crypt* is free. Tours will begin at 3 and 4 p.m., and last approximately 1 hour. The event is a walking tour. Comfortable shoes are highly recommended.

Oak Cemetery is located between Greenwood Ave. and Old Greenwood Rd. south of Dodson Ave. Parking is available at Creekmore Park, the Boy Scouts building, Girls Inc., and Ballman Elementary School. Shuttle buses will run throughout the event.



Starry Nights Movies



Fort Smith parks are the places to be for movies under the stars this summer. On the third Friday of each month through August, your family can enjoy a feature-length movie on a big screen. Admission is free. All you need to bring are your lawn chairs, blankets, popcorn

and your favorite non-alcoholic beverages.

Starry nights movies are brought to you by **Check Marks for Parks**. Rounding up your monthly municipal service bill to the next dollar provides funding for this and other parks programs.

May 15, 8:30 p.m.	Tilles Park 3700 Grand Ave.	Bolt
June 19, 8:45 p.m.	Creekmore Park 3301 South M St.	The Longshots
July 17, 8:45 p.m.	Tilles Park 3700 Grand Ave.	Hotel for Dogs
August 21, 8:15 p.m.	Creekmore Park 3301 South M St.	Bedtime Stories

Park Concert Schedule Announced

Fort Smith parks has announced the first half of its summer concert series. On Thursday evenings beginning May 18th at the River Park amphitheater, you can hear bands like Cantrell and Friends, Dorian Cross Trio, and South 40 Band.

Performances begin at 8 p.m., and admission is free. The River Park is located on Clayton Expwy.

at North A St. A complete line up of concert performers is available on the Internet at www.fortsmithparks.com.



To be persuasive, we must be believable;
to be believable, we must be credible;
to be credible, we must be truthful.

...Edward R. Murrow

With Events and Recreation

Fort Smith Classic Brings Green to the Community

Fort Smithians will have an opportunity to observe and play golf with top-notch professional golfers during the 12th annual Fort Smith Classic presented by Stephens Inc. The tournament week begins June 13th with the Tee Off Ball followed by practice rounds and pro-am events.

This year's tournament features a prayer breakfast and entertainment events many evenings at Hardscrabble Country Club. Also there will be a FREE concert sponsored by Cox Communications on Thursday, June 18th at 7 p.m. at the River Park. Tickets, which are required for admission, are available at Cox Communications and at Arvest Bank locations in Fort Smith and Van Buren. There's a limit of 4 tickets per person.

The PGA Tour professionals play the Hardscrabble County Club course competitively June 18-21. This year's purse is \$550,000.



Photo courtesy of Fort Smith Classic

The Fort Smith Classic is one of the premier events on the Nationwide Tour. The tournament has become known as "Little Augusta" on the feeder circuit to the PGA Tour.

Golfers aren't the only benefactors of the Fort Smith Classic. Local charities are supported by the week's activities. During its first 11 years, the tournament has donated more than \$1.3 million to over 40 area charities. This year, the Fort Smith Boys and Girls Club, Girls Inc., the Children's Service League, First Tee of Fort Smith, WestArk RSVP, and the Children's Emergency Shelter will benefit from the community's attendance and participation in Fort Smith Classic events.

New this year will be **pink on the links** day on Friday, June 19th to build awareness about breast cancer and to raise funds for the Ozark affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

More information about this year's Fort Smith Classic and volunteer opportunities is available at 782-3410 or on the Internet at www.fortsmithclassic.com. Support the tournament and local charities with your involvement.



Downtown **Heats** Up With Riverfront **Blues** Festival

This year's Fort Smith Riverfront Blues Festival promises to be the best ever with nationally-known headliners. The Robert Cray Band and Room Full of Blues will entertain festival goers. A complete lineup of festival performers and show times is available on the Internet at www.riverfrontbluesfest.org.

The best little blues festival in America will be held on Friday and Saturday, June 26th and 27th at the Harry E. Kelley Riverfront Park. The park is located in downtown Fort Smith at the intersection of Clayton Expwy. and North A St. Admission is \$5 at the door each day.

The festival will continue its blues in the schools program which educates students about the importance of this musical genre. Festival performers will be

visiting selected public schools. The Fort Smith Riverfront Blues Society provides scholarships to local students to help young, aspiring musicians further their musical education.



Bountiful Harvest at Farmers Markets Downtown



Residents who like to purchase farm-fresh produce don't have to leave the city to find their favorite fruits, vegetables and flowers. Fort Smithians can shop 2 downtown farmers markets.

Each Tuesday and Saturday from 7 a.m. to 12 noon, as many as 30 farmers offer their home grown fruits and vegetables and home-

baked goods at the Garrison Ave. farmers market. Plants, flowers, jams, jellies, local art work and crafts are also available. The market is held on the municipal parking lot at Garrison Ave. and North 2nd St.

The Garrison Ave. farmers market will have special events such as a salsa festival on Saturday, June 6th and an iron chef contest using market produce later in the season. For more information about the Garrison Ave. farmers market, call 784-1001 or 479-675-3339.

A second downtown farmers market is held each Saturday from 7 a.m. to 12 noon beginning in June at Brunswick Place. The market is located on North B St. between 9th and 10th Streets.

Brunswick Place becomes a village market with area farmers offering their harvests. For more information about the Brunswick Place farmers market, call 785-4651.

ENTERTAINMENT CALENDAR

<i>To His Glory</i>	April 25	Join the Fort Smith Symphony and the Canterbury Choral Society of Oklahoma City for a tribute to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Fort Smith Convention Center. 452-7575 or www.fortsmithsymphony.org for tickets.
<i>Top of the Pops</i>	May 9	The Fort Smith Symphony presents Broadway hits, Hollywood showpieces and popular classics at the Fort Smith Convention Center. 452-7575 or www.fortsmithsymphony.org for tickets.
<i>Old Fort Days Futurity</i>	May 16-23	World's richest barrel racing competition at Kay Rodgers Park. 783-6176 or www.kayrodderspark.com for info and tickets.
<i>Old Fort Days Rodeo</i>	May 25-30	The 76 th annual rodeo begins with a parade on Garrison Ave. on Memorial Day at 10 a.m. PRCA rodeo competition nightly at Kay Rodgers Park. 783-6176 or www.kayrodderspark.com for info and tickets.
<i>Harvey</i>	June 4-13	Join this 6'3 ^{1/2} " tall rabbit at the Fort Smith Little Theater as he helps a family deal with embarrassment, obsessive behavior and mental health pundits. 783-2966 or www.fslt.org for show times and tickets.
<i>Fort Smith Classic Concert</i>	June 18	FREE concert sponsored by Cox Communications. 7 p.m. at the River Park. Clayton Expwy. at North B. St. Tickets required for admission.
<i>Mayor's Fourth of July</i>	July 4	Family fun begins at 7 p.m. with the River Valley Community Band and Mr. Cabbage Head and the Screaming Radishes. Food and beverages will be available for purchase. The celebration of independence concludes with the greatest fireworks show in western Arkansas shortly after dusk followed by an encore performance of Mr. Cabbage Head and the Screaming Radishes. All at the Harry E. Kelley Riverpark. FREE admission.

Reporter's Notebook

FOCUS ON FORT SMITH is circulated quarterly to all residences and businesses in the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas. Please address all correspondence to:

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P.O. Box 1908
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CITY BOARD MEETINGS

Board of Directors meetings are held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month at 6 p.m. in the Fort Smith Public Schools Service Center, 3205 Jenny Lind Road, building B. Study sessions are held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month at 12 noon at the main Fort Smith Public library, 3201 Rogers Avenue. To learn of agenda information, call the city clerk's office at 784-2208. Agendas with staff reports, a summary of meeting actions, meeting minutes and audio recordings of board meetings may be found on the city's web site at www.fortsmithar.gov. Click on government and then mayor and board of directors.

The public is invited to all meetings. At regular meetings, the public may comment on agenda items and may introduce items involving city government not listed on the agenda.



Home Owners and Seniors Qualify for Tax Breaks

Arkansas homeowners may qualify for a reduction in their real estate taxes. If you own the property which is your principal place of residence, you can receive up to a \$350 credit on your annual real estate tax bill. The homestead designation also limits the rate of increase in your annual real estate taxes. Once you've qualified for the homestead tax credit, you don't need to re-apply each year.

Homeowners who are 65 or older or disabled may have their real estate taxes frozen to avoid future tax increases. Contact the assessor's office when one of the owners turns 65 or becomes disabled to freeze your tax amount.

If you're not sure whether or not you're receiving the homestead tax credit or if you'd like to apply for it or the senior/disabled tax freeze, call the Sebastian County Assessor's Office at 784-1516 or contact them by e-mail at byandell@co.sebastian.ar.us.

Property Assessment Deadline Approaches

Citizens have until May 29th to assess their personal property for 2009. After May 29th, a 10% late penalty applies.

Personal property assessments include vehicles and business property. Proof of current assessment is required in order to renew your vehicle license plate.

Assessments may be made at either of the Sebastian County Assessor's offices. The main office is located in the county courthouse, 35 South 6th St., room 105. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Phoenix Ave. branch is in the state revenue office at 6515 Phoenix Ave. Office hours there are Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Assessments can be accomplished over the phone by calling 783-8948. You may also assess via the Internet if you assessed last year and you've had no changes to your name, address and the vehicles being assessed. Go to www.sebastiancountyonline.com and click on personal property assessment. New residents and businesses must assess the first time in person.

Featuring *Fast Facts About Fort Smith*

The total value of all real estate - land and buildings - in Fort Smith is estimated to be \$3.8 billion. The single largest property value is Central Mall.



HOMETOWN

Fort Smith and our region benefit tremendously from conventions and events brought to our area. Attracting these happenings relies on the efforts of everyone in the hospitality industry. However, some of the best leads come from local citizens.

The newest hometown hospitality hero is **James Collins** and the Fort Smith Juniors Volleyball Assn. Collins and the association recently brought 4,000 players and their families to Fort Smith for volleyball tournaments over 2 weekends. Participants came from Missouri, Kansas, Texas, Tennessee, Mississippi, Oklahoma



HOSPITALITY HEROES

and Arkansas. The tournaments produced an economic benefit of \$2 million for the region's economy. On behalf of Fort Smith's hospitality industry, *THE FOCUS* thanks James Collins and the Fort Smith Juniors Volleyball Assn. for bringing tournaments to our area.

Contact the Fort Smith convention and visitors bureau to see how you and your group can be recognized as a Fort Smith hometown hospitality hero.
Call Ramona Moon at 783-8888.

Guess Who's Coming To Town

The renewal of spring brings a resurgence in building activity in Fort Smith. Here's a list of significant new construction activity from the Fort Smith building division.

The Woods at Chaffee Crossing residential subdivision	Massard Rd. at Zero St.	Ongoing
Clark Family Chiropractic Center	8000 Dallas St.	Summer, 2009
Ligon Dental Clinic	8020 Dallas St.	Summer, 2009
Cisterna Woods residential subdivision	Chaffee Crossing along Massard Rd.	Ongoing
Best Western Hotel	6500 Rogers Ave.	Summer, 2009
Willowbrook residential subdivision	Brooken Hill Dr. at Hwy. 253	Ongoing
Second Street Live performing theater	101 North 2 nd St.	Fall, 2009
River Valley Musculoskeletal Center hospital addition	3601 W.E. Knight Dr.	Fall, 2009
Industrial Splicing	3729 Wheeler Ave.	Fall, 2009
Peterson Chemicals	4851 Regions Park Dr.	Fall, 2009
Umarex USA manufacturing and distribution center	7700 Chad Colley Blvd.	Fall/Winter, 2009
Annoor Academy	5900 South 58 th St.	Fall/Winter, 2009
Fort Smith Transit transfer station	200 Wheeler Ave.	Fall/Winter, 2009

Voices In The City

....speakers bureau formed

Have you ever wondered how the police use modern technology to solve a crime, why parks are important to a community or how a land use and zoning plan affect property values? These and many other intriguing questions about city services can be answered through a presentation to your civic, church, school or other community organization.

City staffers speak regularly about a variety of topics. There's now available a list of topics as a resource guide that program planners can access when seeking speakers for their organizations' meetings. The topics and contact information are available at www.fortsmithar.gov. Search for *speakers bureau*. Or, you can call the city administrator's office at 784-2201 for a list.

When you lose, don't lose the lesson.

City's Financial Report Receives Highest Award

The City of Fort Smith has received a *Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting* from the Government Finance Officers Assn. This is the highest award given for governmental accounting and financial reporting.

The award was made for the city's 2007 comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). The CAFR has been judged by an impartial panel to meet a spirit of full disclosure and to clearly communicate the city's financial condition. Of the nearly 36,000 units of government in the U.S., only 5% qualify for the award. Only 7

other Arkansas cities have earned the coveted certificate.

Fort Smith has received the certificate of achievement for 23 consecutive years. The CAFR is prepared under the supervision of **Kara Bushkuhl**, the city's director of finance. It and other financial documents are available for public review at the city's finance department, 623 Garrison Ave., suite 512. The CAFR can be viewed on the city's web site at www.fortsmithar.gov.

Click on departments and then finance.

water to runoff without natural filtration before entering waterways.

While both gray and green infrastructure are important in a city, communities that foster green infrastructure wherever possible are more livable, produce fewer pollutants, and have more economical living costs. However, balancing the gray with the green can be a serious challenge for a local government.

Fortunately, the City of Fort Smith has on staff an urban forester. **Alison Litchy** has been hired recently to evaluate and promote the green infrastructure of our community.

The city has a commemorative tree planting program which Litchy administers in Oak Cemetery and all

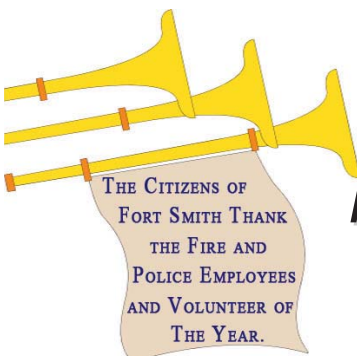
the parks in the community. Her expertise in appropriate types of trees for this area and the need to increase the tree canopy is very valuable in her maintaining the city's lovely and necessary greenscape.

Litchy identifies and maps trees, recommends the planting of appropriate trees and does some of the trimming herself. She may be small in stature, but she can wield a pruner very dutifully. Litchy works in coordination with the city's GIS department to update parks maps of each tree.

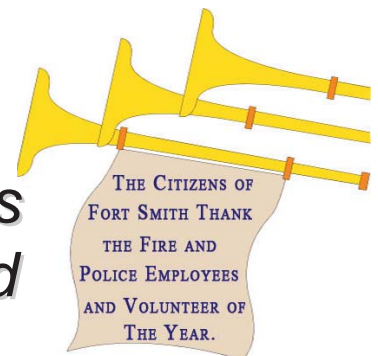
Also under the responsibility of Litchy is the fulfillment of the requirement of Fort Smith's designation as a Tree City USA. One

of the requirements is to have on staff a professional forester or arborist. Litchy fills that requirement as she earned her bachelor of science in forestry at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

The position of urban forester is split between the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith and the City of Fort Smith parks department. This cooperative effort ensures that the community is receiving the expertise needed for a thriving urban forest. The trees not only shade our neighborhoods and parks, but provide for the measures necessary for the community's ecological health.



Public Safety Employees Of The Year Recognized



The Fort Smith fire and police departments recently honored their employees of the year. The FSPD also recognized its volunteer of the year.

Wayne Barnett was named the police officer of the year. He works diligently to eradicate drugs in the community. Barnett is a 19-year veteran of the FSPD currently assigned to the narcotics unit.

James Wood is the Fort Smith firefighter of the year. He was chosen for his willingness to learn a wide diversity of responsibilities including high angle rescue, hazardous materials incident response, confined space rescue, swift water rescue, vehicle extrication and breathing air pack maintenance. Wood is a firefighter assigned to station 1 located at North 5th and B Streets. He's been with the FSPD for 3 years.

The public safety dispatcher of the year is **Chris George**. He was a dispatcher for 1 year and now works as a patrol officer. George was recognized for his calm and professional

demeanor which safely ended an incident involving a suicidal person who had barricaded himself inside a residence.

Mike Little is the police department's civilian employee of the year. He handles maintenance work for the 37,000 square foot Fort Smith police station. Little received the award for his dependability and his work ethic.

The police reserve officer of the year is **Kelly Mask**. He was selected for the high number of hours he volunteers on patrol duty and for consistently meeting training requirements. Mask has been a reserve officer for 8 years.

The FSPD's volunteer of the year is **Madeline Martinez**. She assists with interpreting for victims and criminals who don't speak English. Martinez's work has helped clear at least 80 cases of graffiti and criminal mischief.

THE FOCUS congratulates the police and fire employees of the year and the volunteer of the year.



City of Fort Smith Officials

Mayor

C. Ray Baker

Board of Directors

Steve Tyler, Ward 1

André Good, Ward 2

Don Hutchings, Ward 3

Bill Maddox, Ward 4

Gary Campbell, At Large, Position 5

Kevin Settle, At Large, Position 6

Dr. Cole Goodman, At Large, Position 7

City Administrator

Dennis Kelly



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Cemetery-
Listed on
the
National
Register of
Historic
Places

City of Fort Smith

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FORT SMITH HONORS MEMORIAL DAY



Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service. It began when organized women's groups in the South were decorating graves before the end of the Civil War.

Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868 by **General John Logan**, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic and was first observed on May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed on the

graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

The true meaning of Memorial Day may be diminishing in some areas. However, the City of Fort Smith has taken pride in retaining the sacred spirit of this eventful day by having a service at the U.S. National Cemetery to honor those fallen in service to our country. Hopefully, we will all remember to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country. Fort Smith's Memorial Day observation will be held at the U.S. National Cemetery, 522 Garland Ave. on Sunday, May 24th at 2:00 p.m.